

- Regarding BSE, there was a partial resumption of trade in beef and other products with Antigua and Barbuda and with Barbados.

#### **Canada's Market Access Priorities for 2004**

- Commence negotiations toward a free trade agreement with CARICOM.
- Regarding BSE, finalize arrangements with Bahamas, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago to resume trade in beef and other products and continue representations with other CARICOM countries for the resumption of trade.

### **IMPROVING ACCESS FOR TRADE IN GOODS AND SERVICES**

At the Canada-CARICOM Summit in Jamaica in January 2001, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and the heads of government of the CARICOM countries agreed to initiate discussions toward a possible free trade agreement. Government officials formally met on a number of occasions to exchange information and views on the scope of possible free trade negotiations, and exploratory discussions continued in 2003. Prime Minister Paul Martin reiterated Canada's commitment during bilateral discussions with CARICOM leaders at the Monterrey Special Summit of the Americas in January 2004.

The Government of Canada launched extensive domestic consultations in late 2001 with business, citizen-based organizations and individual Canadians, as well as with provincial and territorial governments, to obtain advice and views on priorities, objectives and concerns to help define the possible scope of a free trade agreement with the CARICOM countries. The majority of responses received have been supportive of eventual free trade negotiations.

#### **Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy**

Following Canada's May 20, 2003, announcement of a BSE case, many Caribbean countries banned the import of beef and other products. Canada has kept all its trading partners, including the Caribbean countries, fully informed of the results of its investigation and regulatory response, and it is requesting a resumption of trade on scientific grounds. (For further information, see the BSE overview in Chapter 2.)

*Antigua and Barbuda:* In September, Antigua and Barbuda announced the partial lifting of its ban, resulting in the resumption in trade of certain beef and other products.

*Bahamas:* Bahamas has recently advised that it is willing to lift the ban. We are in discussions now with Bahamian authorities to resume trade.

*Barbados:* In October, Barbados advised of the partial lifting of its ban, resulting in the resumption in trade of certain beef and other products.

*Jamaica:* In September, Jamaica announced a partial lifting of its ban. However, final details have not yet been arranged. We are in discussions now with Jamaican authorities to resume trade.

*Trinidad and Tobago:* In September, Trinidad and Tobago advised of the partial lifting of its ban. However, discussions are still under way on the final details to allow trade to resume.

### **HAITI**

Haiti is the only least-developed country (LDC) in the Western Hemisphere. Canada's LDC initiative, which allows duty-free/quota-free treatment for most exports to Canada, came into effect on January 1, 2003. The purpose of the LDC initiative is to strengthen economic development in Haiti by increasing exports and creating employment, while facilitating Canadian investment. It should be noted that Haiti already has low tariffs ranging between 0% and 15%, which compare favourably with the high tariffs of the other CARICOM members.

### **CUBA**

#### **Overview**

Cuba is Canada's largest export market in the Caribbean and its fifth largest in Latin America, with exports totalling \$254 million in 2003. Canada is one of Cuba's largest trading partners and its second largest source of foreign investment. Cuba is an emerging market with significant potential for Canadian exporters and investors. The attractiveness of opportunities is tempered by the continuing U.S. embargo of Cuba and by U.S. legislation that attempts to impose American laws on companies